120 hurt in clashes amid Mexico City anti-crime protests

MEXICO CITY: More than 100 people were injured and 20 arrested during a massive protest in Mexico City against the president's handling of violent crime, local government officials said.

Thousands marched on the capital's historic main public square, the Zocalo, in a demonstration fuelled by young Mexicans with ties to a global wave of Generation Z protests as well as supporters of the domestic "Sombrero Movement," which emerged after the recent assassination of a mayor known for his fight against organised crime.

AFP observed participants of all ages taking part in the rally in front of the National Palace, where President Claudia Sheinbaum lives and works.

Several protesters, some wearing balaclavas, toppled the metal barriers protecting the palace and threw paving stones at riot police, who responded with tear gas.

"For many hours, this mobilisation proceeded and developed peacefully, until a group of hooded individuals began to commit acts of violence," Pablo Vazquez, Mexico City's security chief, told reporters.

Twenty protestors and 100 police were injured, with 40 officers hospitalised for cuts and bruises, he added.

Police arrested 20 people for theft and assault, Vazquez said, and had also launched an investigation into the assault of a journalist from *La Jornada* newspaper, which alleged police officers were behind the incident.

Sheinbaum, in power since October 2024, maintained approval ratings above 70 percent in her first year in office but faced growing criticism of her security policies in the wake of several high-profile murders.

"This is one of the most corrupt governments we've ever had," said Valentina Ramirez, a student interviewed by AFP. "It's a corrupt narco-government that wants to defend the corrupt and the cartels instead of the people."

On Saturday, several protesters wore sombreros similar to the style of hat made famous by Carlos Manzo, a mayor in western Michoacan state who was assassinated on Nov 1. He had been known for his crusade against drug-trafficking gangs in his hometown Uruapan.

The assassinated mayor's widow, however, distanced her husband's movement from the demonstration on Saturday. Bernardo Bravo, a leader of lime producers in the same region, had also been shot dead in late October.

Earlier this week, Sheinbaum questioned the motivations for the demonstration and said at her regular morning news conference that the protest was 'inorganic' and 'paid for'. "It is a movement promoted from abroad against the government," she said.

Demonstrators display ed banners bearing messages such as "We are all Carlos Manzo. "You should have protected Carlos Manzo like this!" some protesters shouted at security forces, who responded with fire extinguishers and tear gas. —AFP

MORELIA (Mexico): A demonstrator is detained by police officers during a protest by supporters of the recently killed Michoacan Mayor Carlos Manzo, in Michoacan state.—Reuters

Chilean right wing eyes return to power

SANTIAGO: Chileans are voting in a presidential election on Sunday that's pitting the governing leftist coalition against an array of right-wing candidates and will also redefine the country's legislature.

There are eight candidates in the race and none are expected to get the 50 per cent plus one vote needed to win the election outright, likely triggering a run-off between the top two candidates on Dec 14.

Chilean law bans opinion polls 15 days before elections but the last numbers showed Jeannette Jara, the governing coalition candidate from the Communist Party, in the lead, with far-right Jose Antonio Kast, from the Republican Party, in second.

Experienced moderate-right politician Evelyn Matthei, a former mayor and senator, led early polls but dipped in recent months and has been trading third place with libertarian firebrand Johannes Kaiser from the National Libertarian Party.—Reuters

UK asylum overhaul to impose 20-year wait for permanent settlement

- Home minister to table new proposals in parliament today
- British govt defends refugee shake-up in face of hard-right

LONDON: Britain's interior ministry said on Sunday it would make refugee status temporary, and the wait for permanent settlement would be quadrupled to 20 years under the country's most sweeping overhaul of policy on asylum seekers in modern times.

The Labour government has been hardening its immigration policies, above all on illegal small-boat crossings from France, in efforts to stem the soaring popularity of the populist Reform UK party, which has driven the immigration agenda.

But the proposals were criticised as "harsh and unnecessary" by the Refugee Council charity and are likely to be opposed by left-wing lawmakers within Prime Minister Keir Starmer's embattled Labour government.

"I really reject this idea that dealing with this problem is somehow engaging in far-right talking points," Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood told *BBC*. "This is a moral mission for me, because I can see illegal migration is tearing our country apart, it is dividing communities."

Presently, those given refugee status have it for five years, after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain and eventually citizenship. But Mahmood's ministry, known as the Home Office, said it would cut the length of refugee status to 30 months. That protection will be "regularly reviewed" and refugees will be forced to return to their home countries once they are deemed safe, it added.

The ministry announced that it would create "new safe and legal routes for genuine refugees" through "capped work and study routes".

Asylum claims in Britain are at a record high, with some 111,000 applications made in the year to June 2025, according to official figures.

The Home Office called the new proposals, which Mahmood will lay out in parliament on Monday, the "largest overhaul of asylum policy in modern times". It said the reforms would make it less attractive for irregular migrants to come to Britain, and make it easier to remove those already in the country.

Benefits crackdown

A statutory legal duty to provide support to asylum seekers, introduced in a 2005 law, would also be revoked, the Home Office said.

That means housing and weekly financial allowances would no longer be guaranteed for asylum seekers.

It would be "discretionary", meaning the government could deny assistance to any asylum seeker who could work or support themselves but did not, or those who committed crimes.

Starmer, elected in July 2024, is under pressure to stop migrants crossing the Channel in small boats from France, something that also troubled his Conservative predecessors.

More than 39,000 people, many fleeing conflict, have arrived this year following such dangerous journeys — more than for the whole of 2024 but lower than the record set in 2022.

Reform, led by firebrand Nigel Farage, has led Labour by double-digit margins in opinion polls for most of this year.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, urged the government to rethink its plans, saying they "will not deter" the crossings.

"They should ensure that refugees who work hard and contribute to Britain can build secure, settled lives and give back to their communities," he said.

Labour is taking inspiration from Denmark's coalition government — led by the centre-left Social Democrats — which has implemented some of the strictest migration policies in Europe.

Senior British officials recently visited the Scandinavian country, where successful asylum claims are at a 40-year-low.—Agencies

US may finalise rare earths deal with China by 27th

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Sunday that Washington hopes to finalize a deal with China for securing supplies of rare earths by the Thanksgiving holiday at the end of November.

Under the tentative deal — reached in late October at a meeting between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in South Korea — Beijing agreed to suspend for one year certain export restrictions on critical minerals.

China is hugely dominant in the mining and processing of rare earths, which are essential for sophisticated electronic components across a range of industries including auto, electronics and defense.

"We haven't even finished the agreement, which we hope to have done by Thanksgiving," which falls on Nov 27, Bessent said on *Fox News*'s 'Sunday Morning Futures' programme.

"And I am confident that — post our meeting in Korea between the two leaders, President Trump, President Xi — that China will honor their agreements." But, Bessent warned, if Beijing balks, the United States has 'lots of levers' to retaliate.

The Treasury secretary insisted that under the deal, rare earths "will flow freely as they did before April 4," when China slapped restrictions on the sector, requiring export licenses for certain products in response to Trump's sweeping tariffs.

Under the deal reached by Trump and Xi, the United States will cut back tariffs on Chinese products, and Beijing will buy at least 12 million metric tons of American soybeans by the end of this year, and 25 million metric tons in 2026.

China, which had stopped buying US soybeans in response to Trump's tariffs, "made pawns out of our great soybean farmers," Bessent said. "But we believe that we have remedied that," he added.—AFP

Pope urges world leaders not to leave poor behind

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV decried poverty on Sunday, urging world leaders and Catholics to reach out to marginalised people, as the Church celebrated a "Jubilee of the Poor".

The US pope has made social justice a key theme of his papacy, now in its sixth month since being made head of the world's Catholics in May following the death of Pope Francis.

The Church, Leo said during a mass at St Peter's Basilica, is "still wounded by old and new forms of poverty", but "hopes to be 'mother of the poor, a place of welcome and justice'".

Sunday marked a special Jubilee of the Poor, one of many such celebrations during the holy year, which has drawn pilgrims from around the world. It fell on the World Day of the Poor, an annual observance begun by Francis in 2017.

Following mass, Pope Leo was to attend a lunch at the Vatican with a group of homeless people, refugees and the disabled, while other community events to help the poor were planned around Rome.

"I urge heads of state and the leaders of nations to listen to the cry of the poorest," said Leo during his address.

"There can be no peace without justice, and the poor remind us of this in many ways, through migration as well as through their cries, which are often stifled by the myth of well-being and progress that does not take everyone into account, and indeed forgets many individuals, leaving them to their fate," he said.

Beyond poverty itself, he cited "many moral and spiritual situations of poverty", resulting in loneliness.—AFP

Iran says US not ready for 'equal and fair' nuclear talks

Denies any 'undeclared nuclear enrichment facility'

DUBAI: Washington's current approach toward Tehran does not indicate any readiness for "equal and fair negotiations", Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday, after US President Donald Trump hinted last week at potential discussions.

Following Israel's attack on Iran in June, which was joined by US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, attempts at renewing dialogue on Tehran's nuclear programme have failed.

The United States, its European allies and Israel accuse Tehran of using its nuclear programme as a veil for efforts to develop the capability to produce weapons. Iran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

Tehran and Washington underwent five rounds of indirect nuclear talks prior to the 12-days-war, but faced obstacles such as the issue of domestic uranium enrichment, which the US wants Iran to forego.

"The US cannot expect to gain what it couldn't in war through negotiations," Abbas Araqchi said during a Tehran conference named "international law under assault."

"Iran will always be prepared to engage in diplomacy, but not negotiations meant for dictation," he added.

Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh accused Washington of pursuing its wartime goals with "negotiations as a show".

During the same conference, the Iranian foreign minister said the country had no undeclared uranium enrichment sites and that all of its facilities were monitored by the UN's nuclear watchdog.

The assertion came after US media outlets, including the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, reported that Iran had accelerated construction at a secret underground nuclear site called "Pickaxe Mountain", or Kuh-e Kolang, near its Natanz facility.

"There's no undeclared nuclear enrichment facility in Iran; all of our facilities are under the safeguard and monitoring of the agency," Araghchi said during a forum in Tehran.

He added there was "no enrichment" taking place at present because the sites were damaged in the recent war.

There has been no mention of the Pickaxe Mountain site by officials or any Iranian media.

Araghchi's remarks came ahead of a Board of Governors meeting by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting slated for later this week.

'Fundamental review'

During Sunday's forum in Tehran, Iranian officials warned the UN body against adopting an anti-Iran resolution.

"In case of a resolution, Iran will consider a review of its relations with the IAEA and will conduct a fundamental review," said the deputy foreign minister.

In the aftermath of the war, Tehran suspended its cooperation with the IAEA and restricted the watchdog's inspectors from accessing the bombed sites, accusing it of bias and failing to condemn the attacks.—Agencies

Much ground to cover as COP30 enters second week

Climate summit sees some progress on Global Goal on Adaptation; North-South divide mars talks despite early agenda adoption

By Zaki Abbas

BELEM: A man walks past a huge globe representing the earth hanged inside a ward for NGOs and civil and social associations, at the COP30 UN Climate Change Conference.—AFP

ISLAMABAD: One week into negotiations, COP30 in Belem or the 'Implementation COP' has much ground to cover — the first week of talks did not yield anything substantial, besides the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage's (FRLD) call for proposals and the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF).

Though the COP presidency managed to adopt an agenda on its first day without the 'agenda fights' by starting presidency consultations on four key areas — trade, finance, 1.5 °C, and emission reporting. On Saturday, after the stocktaking plenary, COP30 president Andr Corr a do Lago said the "presidency consultations" on four key issues had been "rich with ideas and important perspectives", according to Carbon Brief.

Harjeet Singh, strategic advisor at the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, however, said these issues, including Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement that pertains to finance, would have likely held up the agenda adoption so that the presidency started discussions on these.

"…so all these contentious issues which could delay the adoption of agenda, the presidency started these consultations. I can tell you there's hardly any progress on all these issues," he said.

Speaking about the Article 9.1 under which developed nations are supposed to fund adaptation and mitigation efforts in the developing countries, Mr Singh said, "Ministers are arriving at a procedural nightmare because the Global North refuses to negotiate its legal Article 9.1 finance obligations. The entire fight is public grants versus private loans. The failure on finance is the failure on ambition. 75% of developing country NDCs are conditional on finance they haven't received."

Just transition

"The Global South is proposing real, funded solutions like the Bel m Action Mechanism (BAM) on just transition away from fossil fuels, while the Global North is blocking them. The EU offered a weak 'Action Plan' with no money to kill the G77's funded proposal," he added.

According to the Climate Action Network, a group of civil society organisations, "BAM brings to the table is something genuinely new" and a feat given how diverse the G-77 bloc is with its 134 members. "A Bel m Action Mechanism would provide a well-funded, permanent hub of expertise to gather knowledge, guide policy direction, and support countries in designing and implementing people-centred transitions," CAN said in a statement posted on its website.

Meanwhile, Harjeet Singh blamed the Global North for the adaptation talks, saying they were in crisis because the North was using "accounting tricks" to avoid paying.

Science freelance reporter Renata Fontanetto, based in Brazil, told *Dawn* that this conference has been termed 'implementation COP' to accelerate the mechanisms of the 2015 Paris Agreement and not to create any more mechanisms. "Just to implement the ones we already have, for example, the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)," she said.

The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) is also on the COP30 agenda.

Speaking to *Dawn*, Sustainable Development Policy Institute Executive Director Dr Abid Suleri said the Global Goal on Adaptation was one of the more promising developments, with negotiators nearing an agreement on a framework. "This will be a structural shift as it will turn resilience into a core metric of climate ambition rather than an afterthought," he said.

Dr Suleri said at COP30, Pakistan could secure money from the loss and damage fund, seek support of its NDCs and RSF-linked reforms, and back the G-77 just transition framework.

Fossil fuels

One of the major demands by civil society at COP30 is the phase-out of fossil fuel but ironically more than 1600 delegates from the fossil fuel companies are present at the venue. "This COP is on a knife-edge, and it's being completely undermined by corporate capture. We have over 1,600 fossil fuel lobbyists here—one for every 25 people—walking the halls and telling the firefighters how to do their jobs," said Mr Singh.

Interestingly, the PR firm Edelman, the international media adviser to Brazil's COP30 team, relies on its work with fossil fuel companies for its revenues.

Despite these setbacks, the voice for fossil fuel phaseout is strong at Belem. "...Colombia's leadership in putting forth a declaration at COP30 and announcing a 2026 conference to phase out fossil fuels is inspiring, and we hope to get an outcome to help us build a new Fossil Fuel Treaty to complement the Paris Agreement," Mr Singh added.

Renata Fontanetto agreed. From Belem, she told *Dawn* that there was hope for at least some mention of a roadmap to end fossil fuels. She said a Brazilian mathematician who was previously associated with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change seemed "optimistic about a tiny mention" of the phasing down or phasing out of fossil fuels in the final text in some form. However, there is another week of negotiations ahead, she said, referring to the uncertainty that is the hallmark of these talks.

Tropical Forest Forever Facility

The Brazil-led TFFF praised by some for its focus on protecting forests and allocating 20pc of the raised money towards indigenous groups, also garnered criticism.

Teresa Anderson, Global Lead on climate justice, ActionAid International, said it was far better to use the grant-based money to help the communities instead of putting money in a complex financial mechanism that represents a real gamble on whether or not they are going to raise money that would actually reach the communities.

She said big industrial agriculture, which was the biggest driver of deforestation, needed to be at the centre of Brazil's efforts to prevent deforestation, but right "now we don't see them talking about it even though it elephant in the room…".

However, what constitutes success is difficult to tell at this COP, unlike the previous one in Baku, where the finance goal was clear.